

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said receptor is the hATB<sup>o</sup> receptor for type D mammalian retroviruses.

72. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said indicator cell is a cancer cell.

73. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said indicator cell is a cell of human origin.

74. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said method comprises correlating the formation of syncytia with expression of the polypeptide on the surface of the producer cell.

75. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said producer cell is selected from the group consisting of bone cells, muscle cells, placenta cells, endothelial cells, epithelial cells, glial cells, tumor cells, and cells derived from tumor cell lines.

76. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said producer cell is a cell from a blood vessel.

77-82. (Canceled)

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim ~~56~~90, further comprising testing effectiveness of or selecting medicinal substances, drugs or gene/prodrug systems by said method by contacting said producer cells with medicinal substances, drugs or gene/prodrug systems and determining the effect of said medicinal substances, drugs or gene/prodrug systems on said formation or non-formation of syncytia.

84. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, further comprising obtaining said producer cell by transfecting a cell with a vector comprising a gene encoding said polypeptide and a promoter for expressing said polypeptide.

85. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~84, wherein said promoter is a heterologous promoter.

86. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~84, wherein said promoter is an autologous promoter.

87. (Canceled)

88. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~56~~90, wherein said contacting is conducted at a neutral pH.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 83, further comprising selecting a medicinal substance, drugs or gene/prodrug system candidate based on occurrence of an interaction between the polypeptide of the producer cell and the neutral amino acid transporter cell surface receptor of said indicator cell.

90. (Previously Presented) A method for detecting whether an interaction occurs between a polypeptide of a producer cell and a neutral amino acid transporter cell surface receptor of an indicator cell *ex vivo* or *in vitro*, wherein the polypeptide has a sequence which consists of SEQ ID NO:1,

said method comprising:

contacting said indicator cell with said producer cell;

observing formation of syncytia between said producer cell and said indicator cell or non-formation of syncytia between said producer cell and said indicator cell; and

correlating said formation of syncytia with occurrence of an interaction between the polypeptide of the producer cell and the neutral amino acid transporter cell surface receptor of said indicator cell or correlating said non-formation of syncytia with a lack of an interaction

between the polypeptide of the producer cell and the neutral amino acid transporter cell surface receptor of said indicator cell.